

# **Risk Assessment of the BU National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories**

## **NIH Blue Ribbon Panel**



**May 16, 2008  
Gardner Auditorium  
Massachusetts State House**



# Topics for Today

- **What is the purpose of the Blue Ribbon Panel?**
- **How is the Panel approaching its tasks?**
- **What are the Panel's preliminary findings?**
- **What are the Panel's next steps?**
- **Input from the citizens of Boston and surrounding communities as well as general public**

# How is the Panel Approaching its Tasks?



# Approach

- **Review background materials:**
  - **Previous studies**
  - **Judicial materials**
  - **Safety and emergency preparedness plans**
  - **Epidemiologic and demographic data**
  - **Public input**
- **Explore analytic approaches with the National Research Council Committee**

# Approach

- **Assess what additional studies may be advisable to identify potential risks and public health consequences of:**
  - **Accidental and malevolent releases of infectious agents**
  - **Exposure to infectious agents in urban versus less populated locations**
- **Define the key elements of studies:**
  - **Infectious agents**
  - **Scenarios**
  - **Methodologies**

# Approach

- **Review strategies to minimize chances of release and to mitigate potential public health consequences**
- **Assess characteristics of the surrounding community and relationships with community**
- **Advise on conduct of studies and final reports**

# What Are the Panel's Preliminary Findings?



# Preliminary Findings

- **Additional studies should be performed to address judicial requests and public concerns**
- **Importance of transparency regarding:**
  - **Design and conduct of studies**
  - **Interpretation of final results**



# Preliminary Findings

- **These studies should involve :**
  - **An array of infectious agents that vary in terms of their ability to:**
    - **Infect people and cause disease**
    - **Be transmitted from person-to-person**
  - **An array of realistic scenarios in which an individual is infected and/or infectious agents are released into the community**
    - **Variations of these cases that address the concept of “worst case”**

# Preliminary Findings

- **Studies should:**
  - **Be based on current scientific understanding**
  - **Be realistic**
    - **Relate to a real case if possible**
    - **Include agents that are recognized public health concerns**
  - **Include releases that are representative of what could occur through:**
    - **Accidental release**
    - **Malevolent action**

# Preliminary Findings

- **Studies should:**
  - Use proven methods and reflect known epidemiologic data
  - Take into account characteristics of the surrounding community
  - Address:
    - Risk of agent release
    - Probability of occurrence
    - What happens when safety measures and emergency plans do and don't work

# What are the Panel's Next Steps?



# Next Steps

- **Present work plan to the Advisor Committee to the NIH Director**
  - **June 6, 2008**
- **Advise on conduct of studies and analyses**
  - **Latter half of 2008**
- **Obtain public input regarding draft study report**
  - **First half of 2009**
- **Review and advise on final report**
  - **First half of 2009**



# Written Comments

- **Email:** [NIH\\_BRP@od.nih.gov](mailto:NIH_BRP@od.nih.gov)

- **Mail to:**

**NIH Blue Ribbon Panel**

**National Institutes of Health**

**6705 Rockledge Drive, Suite 700**

**MSC 7985**

**Bethesda, Maryland 20892**